DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 170 763 CS 204 818

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TITLE A Plea for the University Tradition.
PUB DATE Aug 78
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (61st, Seattle, Washington, August 13-16, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Policy; *Educational Problems; Higher Education; *Journalism Education; *Professional Education; *Universities

ABSTRACT

The university tradition of rational debate, moral concern, and public ideals is threatened by the forces of unchallenged professionalism, isolated privatization of individuals, and the loss of public life. Journalism education, caught between these forces, contributes to excessive professionalization at the expense of the university tradition by transmitting a "take it for granted" attitude to the journalistic profession rather than examining the moral and conceptual foundations of the profession. The university tradition, which attempts to adopt the general moral and intellectual point of view, must be cultivated not only within professional schools such as that of journalism but across the university. Specific recommendations to journalism scholars include the following: conceptually restore the idea of public life; aid the media in restoring the public life and public discourse to a real role in the political scene; and extirpate much of the professional spirit of the academic curriculum, asserting the scholarly tradition of concern with broader issues. (DF)

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A Plea for the University Tradition

James W. Carey

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Presidential Address to the Association for Education in Journalism, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, August 13, 1978.

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A Plea for the University Tradition

James W. Carey

This is the first presidential address to be presented to this association since 1972 and it is, therefore, with some temerity that I reestablish this interrupted tradition. I must admit that it seemed like a much better idea last summer when it was suggested to me than it did during the last few months when I composed it or today when I have to present it. I also wish that this tradition could be reasserted by someone more artful than myself. I have encouraged other presidents in recent years to do so and so could hardly resist when it fell time to take my own advice.

I have but two justifications for doing this. First, I think it is a responsibility of office to attempt to look beyond the headlines, beyond current concerns, to the deeper and more enduring intellectual problems that face us and what better forum than the opening session of this convention. Second, there are very few other perquisites of this office. The opportunities for corruption are nil. There are no vicuna coats, trips to romantic islands, awaiting limousines, shoe boxes filled with cash, call girls, call boys or call androgynes. The only gift is a couple of boxes of official stationery on which to write more letters than John Adams and to recipients generally less sympathetic and interested than Abigail. I had but one flirtation with corruption and was saved against my will. The mid-winter meeting was held in Chicago at the Sheraton. The management

of the hotel, as is their practice I later found out, delivered a gift box of scotch and bourbon, along with other consumables to the parlor that intersected the rooms containing myself, Harold Wilson and Quint Wilson. Our payoff, I take it, for awarding them the business. But before the Wilsons and myself could settle in for a night of debauchery, the Teaching Standards Committee led by their intrepid chairman, Paul Peterson, appeared for a meeting and thinking me an uncommonly generous president, proceeded to pour the gift into themselves. As Danny Kaye used to say, Sic Transit Gloria DeHaven.

My title, "A Plea for the University Tradition" alerts you at once that I want to deal with matters both intellectual and ethical. I hope that will not surprise you for my major interest in this association has always been in its contribution to scholarship. In fact, I am of the belief that we can succeed in any and every way--bureaucratically, financially, politically--but if we do not as a group make real contributions to scholarship then our achievement is so much afflatus in a hurricane. It is easy to forget, particularly when you are president, ensnared in the flypaper of this organization, and seem to do nothing but assist in denuding the forests of North America, that we are a scholarly society. But it is something we forget at our peril. And so I want to concentrate on a group of vexing scholarly matters that simultaneously demand intellectual clarity, and ethical precision; matters that relate journalism and communications as a scholarly pursuit to problems of professional practice.

These same matters have occupied many papers I previously presented in this assembly and perhaps confirm for some of you that thought Disraeli directed at one of his opponents: "He was," Disraeli said of his adversary, "a man distinguished for his ignorance; he had one idea and that was wrong."

And, finally, I warn in advance that I would like to state some views about education and the practice of journalism and communications that many of you may find distasteful. But I do so only because what I have to argue is, I think, of importance to the future vitality of this organization. And if all this disarming talk still fails, I'll take refuge once again in an old Irish adage: contention, after all, is better than loneliness.

My argument, "A plea for the university tradition," is a truncated version of a much longer paper on the problem of professionalism. There is a danger, I fully realize, in presenting an abbreviated version of a complex argument for the dangers of misunderstanding are great. Nonetheless, I am willing to risk them. But my title and argument are not particularly original either. I lifted them, as I have lifted much else, from the scholar in this field who has had the most singular influence upon me: the Canadian economist and historian Harold Innis. Innis made his plea for the University tradition in a paper delivered in 1944 at the University of New Brunswick.[1] He recognized earlier than most that WW II was merely prelude to the Cold War. And he recognized that the relationship built up during the War between the academy and the state was to be the enduring one. Once academics marched off to the State department or the War department or, in our case, the Office of War Information, it was going to be hard to keep them down on the academic farm: they were not likely to spiritually come home. This new relationship threatened the integrity of scholarship and scholars as it made learning almost totally an instrument of national and class interest. This servitude to the state, a servitude as much spiritual as financial, threatened the historic independence of scholarship and the loyalty of the scholar to something greater than

transient interests.

There was nothing particularly novel about this argument; it was heard during and in the aftermath of World War I, the war that contributed the phrase "the treason of the intellectuals" to our common language. But, as you read Innis' paper closely you come to realize that he was concerned with more than the effect of the state upon the university. He was also concerned with the effect of the professions. He recognized that each of the professions was attempting to capture the university, each wished to turn its attention to practical matters, to narrow its interests in life, and make it a spokesman for professional interests. Journalism presented a dual threat. First, it was one of the professions that wished to embed itself in and alter the nature of unversity education. But, second, the media presented a graver threat for collectively they unconsciously wished to destroy a sense of time. The interests of journalism, of the media, were in the happenings of the day--the new, the novel, the original, the news. The media represented, in Harold Rosenberg's wry phrase, "the tradition of the new." Under the force of the media, public opinion lost its anchorage because the press was obsessed with the immediate. The intense concern with the present made the interest in the past and future difficult to maintain and cultivated fanaticism: a hyper-involvement with those issues dominating headlines. Public opinion shifted with rapidity, achieved an extraordinary bitterness which soaked through every strata of society. With that, toleration and respect for other points of view disappeared; contempt was democratized, debate and discussion became menaces, all thought sank into simplicities, <u>even</u> among the educated.

In the midst of this grim situation, the university must act as an

institution countervailing against the power of the media. It must not only oppose power with intelligence but keep alive styles of thoughts and forms of discourse the powerful would extirpate. It must maintain the oral tradition, the ideals of public life, the process of slow discussion, debate, evidence and argument on which rationality is founded.

So, Innis made a plea to his colleagues: protect the university tradition, defend it against interests and specialisms that would overwhelm it, maintain the general intellectual and moral point of view, preserve a sense of history and the future. I want to make that same plea.

Now all these arguments are contestable, to be sure. But whatever their truth one thing seems undeniable: there is an inherent tension between the university tradition and the professions the modern university serves. I want to examine this inherent tension between the university tradition and the practice of journalism, a tension that often puts us between a rock and a hard place. Like many of you I have existed, continue to exist, in both worlds. I entered education from the media, a brief career as a writer of just about everything from political speeches through fiction and news stories but mainly as a writer of advertising, would you believe, of singing commercials. I composed hymns to hemorrhoids, symphonies to soporifics. And with that background I am a professor, engaged to profess the truth. How does one do that? How does one reconcile his life in the university with the demands of professional practice? Can it be done at all or must the truth be an inevitable casualty to professional and commercial interests? I usually find European scholars somewhat bemused by what they take to be our arrogant and naive belief that we can pull off this miracle and they come upon our occasional achievements with the nonplussed apprehension of one who has chanced upon a centaur

and finds himself temporarily without a field guide.

Well, I have worried a good deal all about these matters and about our spinal erectness and today I'm going to follow the advice of George Bernard Shaw: "If you can't get the skeleton out of the closet, you might as well make it dance." To set the waltz in motion let me offer you some views on the history of journalism education in relation to the profession.

I.

The history of journalism education is part of the history of the transformation of the American university into a professional school, and the transformation of American society into a domain of professional power and expertise. The history of journalism education is, therefore, part of the story of the creation of a new social class invested with enormous power, and authority; part of the story of the professionalization of "just about everyone" and the enhancement of professional authority and mystique.

Journalism education begins, for all practical purposes, when Joseph Pulitzer pressed many dollars into the somewhat reluctant hands of Columbia University. Pulitzer's courtship of Columbia lasted twelve years and after an initial outright refusal of his offer his bequest was accepted in 1903. While Pulitzer was not so keen on university education--he said that "the best college was the college of the world" and that he preferred "the university of experience"--he recognized the intimate relationship between university education and the enhanced status of journalists and journalism. At the turn of the century American journalists were an unlikely assortment of upwardly mobile uneducated ethnics, prodigal sons of wealthy parents, failed novelists, itinerant teachers and marginal men. They were trained,

as in most other occupations, by an apprenticeship system. While the printer had been the dominant figure in early American journalism, and the editor dominated much of the 19th century, by the 20th century power and influence were passing to the reporter.[2] But the reporter himself still was likely to have emerged from the print shop and no one mistook him for a man of letters. Reporters were like factory workers and reporting was an upwardly mobile trade. Pulitzer's aim in giving the money to Columbia was to professionalize reporting and to upgrade the status of journalists. The key element in all this, it must be recognized, was the expansion of the market for journalism. In the decades just before and after the turn of the century a series of economic and technological changes radically lowered the cost of producing newspapers while increasing the capacity to rapidly distribute them. In addition, the industry became increasingly adept at collecting large amounts of information and bringing it together before the reader in the form of an encyclopedia from which he could select whatever he desired. In turn, the banner and the headlines favored that news which would attract the largest number of readers. Consequently, news increased in value relative to both editorials and advertising as the element which attracted and held readers. This change in content, in turn, enhanced the value and visibility of the reporter. Pulitzer's bequest was aimed at improving the character and quality of this new figure in journalism and, indirectly, and this must be emphasized, at asserting control over the reporter by instituting standards of writing, reporting, and ethical behavior through professional education.

However, by the time Columbia opened in 1912 the center of journalism education had passed to the state universities. Even there, journalism

education was far from welcomed. The growth of schools of journalism was usually supported by and in some cases mandated by state press associations and the political clout they could muster. At the university where I labored for many years, the University of Illinois, the original School of Journalism was one of but two units in the university that were not created by the Board of Trustees but directly mandated by the state legislature. In the 1870's and 80's one finds the first statements of editors calling for the establishment of schools of journalism as independent professional schools. But the creation of these professional schools did not occur until a coalition was formed between teachers of journalism and the state press association. And this coalition did not form until journalism teachers were blocked by the English departments that housed them from further development of the curriculum. Thus, an uneasy partnership was created, decades after editors started calling for the establishment of journalism schools, between the state press association and the journalism teacher in which the quid pro quo was the power of the university to enhance the image of professionalism.

This coalition, in turn, guaranteed that training in schools and departments of journalism would be modelled on the community press. This made them different, at least in theory, than Pulitzer's experiment. Pulitzer's bequest had emphasized the training of reporters and even forbade the teaching of advertising, management and circulation. The state press associations were made up of smaller, non-urban newspapers and on such papers the division of labor that had occurred on large urban dailies in response to the growth of the market did not take place. As a result the roles of reporter, editor, printer and business manager were rolled into

one on these smaller papers. And, therefore, journalism schools taught the presumed skills of this omnibus journalist rather than concentrating on the skills of the reporter. This in turn gave strong representation in the curriculum to printing, advertising, editorial writing and business management as part of a technical education. It also had a consequence for the form of professionalism in journalism schools, as we shall see in a moment. But even where journalism education developed under the protection of the state press association its object was to promote professionalism--to mark off a distinctive status for editors in the general community of American business. Again, a telling and artless little example from the archives of the University of Illinois. In 1926, a year before the School of Journalism opened in Urbana, the Governor of Illinois, Len Small, received the following from the president of the Illinois Press Association:

> "Now then, the newspaper boys all know and greatly appreciate your friendship for them and personally I can see no one thing which you might do in their behalf which would impress them with your sincerity more than to use your influence with the university authorities to bring about the establishment of this department. I am confident that a word from you to President Kinley would go far toward attaining the end which every newspaperman in this state desires, for if a department were established our profession would be given a national prestige which this state does not now possess."[3]

As the quote testifies, schools of journalism, and I am here making much of one example, were less attempts to educate for a profession, than to call one into existence--as if the wish were father to the thought. But most critically, perhaps, journalism education came at the tail end of a long campaign to professionalize American universities, to make them expressions of the interests and status aspirations of professional groups.

In the decades following the Civil War, professionalism became a central tenet in the ideology of the middle class and the university, in turn, became an extension of the interest of that class. Education came to be valued to the precise degree it led to a professional career. The drive and dynamic here was a political one. In the decades after the Civil War the authority of the middle class was creaking. The period of rapid urbanization and emigration brought also widespread disorder, a mocking of civil and business authority, the threat of machine politics and mob rule. An answer to anticipated chaos was found in the universities and professions and their relationship. The new university was justified on the basis of the non-partisan, objective and meritocratic class it would create. In short, the professionalization of the university and "just about everyone" was not driven by a lust for equality but what we have come to call a lust for meritocracy. "It was guided by the belief that only the accepted authority of an elite of merit at the pinnacle of an active middle class could control the crosswinds that blew American society in opposing directions in the late 19th century."[4] That America was so much more susceptible to the claims of professional authority derived precisely from the absence of traditional classes and the authority that flowed from them. The weight of the authority of those professions could not be minimized in a nation that not only lacked a respect for historical tradition but also lacked, for the most part, a common past. In short, and to finally come to the point, the growth of meritocratic professional classes pivoted on the substitution of the authority of knowledge--specifically of scientific knowledge--for the authority of an absent tradition. That is, the authority of the professions were finally derived from their presumed

capacity to speak with the voice of positive science: to ground both their methods of selection and their understanding of human problems in the special methods and insight of science. Presidents of this era regularly spoke for liberal rather than technical education, for principles rather than techniques. Don't be misled here: what was meant by liberal culture was that scientifically grounded positive knowledge useful for a professional career in a meritocratic society. As President McCosh of Princeton said, journalism "which exercises such influence in this country will never be elevated till those who supply it have as a rule a college education in the principles of political science."[5] He was not here equating political science with the wisdom of political bosses but anticipating a new positive science of politics. In short, the struggle which the American university led on behalf of the professions was a struggle between professional studies versus practical ones, academic studies versus the apprenticeship system, social science knowledge versus common sense, ethical practitioners versus amoral hacks.

Now journalism and journalism education have always rested in an uneasy relationship to this movement toward professionalism. On the one hand, the conflicts between schools of journalism and their professional sponsors, the state press associations, have become part of the folk lore, folk wisdom and, one must admit, folk illusion of this craft. On the other hand, it was obvious that it would take a considerably remodeled household of professionalism and professional education for journalism to fit comfortably within it. Nonetheless, journalism has increasingly sought and been granted admission. It just hasn't been very comfortable in the overstuffed chairs contoured to law and medicine.

But an unmistakable event has occurred: without meeting the historic canons by which professions are identified, journalism has been made a profession by fiat. As the media have become more central and more centrally visible in the life of society, the prestige of journalists and, therefore, of journalism faculties have risen. And, finally, it turns out that status and prestige, not knowledge or ethics or rectitude, turn out to be the key to professionalism.

II.

Ironically, just at the moment the professional standing of journalism within and without the university is enhanced, a widespread intellectual attack on the very presumptions of professionalism breaks out. The attack on professionalism cannot be explained by the role of attorneys in Watergate or physicians in Medicaid swindles, or top business executives in international bribery, though these events have contributed to shaping popular opinion. The explanation rests with the development of a sustained and compelling intellectual attack. While this attack is most vividly identified with Ivan Illich and certain members of the New Left, their singular importance often distracts us from how widespread and shared are the arguments.

Now I share, at least in a general way, this indictment of the professions and have even, here and there, participated in the formulation of it. I recognize also that it presents a very formidable danger; it can easily slip into a vicious anti-intellectualism: an attack on the very idea of competence. I wish to avoid that result while testifying at the same time to the long run effect of professionalism as part of the general

social changes accompanying industrialization. This history of modern society, and here I borrow freely from the best formulation of this point of view, Christopher Lasch's Haven in a Heartless World,[6] is the assertion of social control over activities once left to individuals or their families. During the first stage of the industrial revolution production was taken out of the household and collectivized in the factory. Then management appropriated the worker's skills and technical knowledge through scientific analysis and brought these skills together under administrative direction. Finally, the professions extended their control over the worker's private life as well, as doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, teachers, child guidance experts, officers of the juvenile court and other specialists began to supervise and profess professional knowlege of every department of life.

Now that is essentially a New Left and to some degree a Marxist interpretation of the role of the professions. However, the same arguments can be formulated, and perhaps more compellingly, in terms and tones that are more moderate and less radical. Nonetheless, the conclusions to which the arguments lead are very much the same.

The principal effect of professionalism is to erode the moral basis of society. It does this because the professions insist that each inhabits a particular moral universe, peculiar unto itself, in which the standards and judgments exercised are those not of the general society and its moral point of view, but of a distinctive code. The professions divide up the moral universe in highly self-conscious ways, reorganize it through the explicit formulation of codes of ethics, and prosecute their distinctive moral claims with judicial, financial and authoritative power. As Charles

Frankel has recently put it: "One of the reasons for the widely held view that morality is in a peculiar state of decline today and that a dangerous 'relativism' has taken over is simply the proliferation in our society of specialized professions, like the law, which have distinctive functions and therefore distinctive ethical norms."[7] Moreover, the narrowness of the moral claims asserted by the professions have two confounding results. First, it means that professionals are privileged to live in a morally less ambiguous universe than the rest of us; they are able to treat as matters of principle what most of us must struggle with situationally and in terms of fine gradations of ethical judgment. Professionals are so busy standing on principle that there is no room left for the rest of us to stand. Secondly, the professions regularly conflate their own moral claims into principles that are binding upon the society for the welfare of everyone independent of their concrete relevance to particular situations. For example, the professions, and journalism is a leading case, often treat the Constitution as a suicide pact, as if it were written on Masada and not in Philadelphia, as if the entire social world must hinge on the sanctity of professional privilege.

We can demonstrate these matters with a problem that cuts across a number of professions, namely the matter of secrecy. Secrecy as a professional prerogative, a right of professional relationship which the rest of us do not possess, originates in relatively narrow contexts: the confessional box, the right of the defendant in criminal cases. But such rights exhibit their moral defect precisely by their imperial quality--their tendency to spread out of these contexts into universal claims protecting all aspects of the relationship and against all other authorities in all

other circumstances. Thus, among attorneys privileged or secret communication has been taken to be part of the attorney-client relationship tout court. As a result, attorneys have been led into a widespread set of practices that, are not only unethical, but patently illegal and they justify them under the privileged communication doctrine. That is, attorneys are now regularly part of tax fraud, real estate swindles, fraudulent inheritance, and a host of other practices, of which the career of Robert Vesco taught us much, and are protected because of the sanctity of the relationship of secrecy between attorney and client. Similarly, though at the moment, and thank God, less seriously, the doctrine of newsman's privilege, an ethically justifiable doctrine in a small number of cases involving the very future of society, is conflated in the latest ethical codes into the very essence of the journalistic relationship. It seems to me that Renata Adler's conclusion on this matter is compelling: There should be only rare and well defined exceptions to the rule that a journalist always reveals his sources; secrecy and journalism are contradictions in terms.[8]

Secondly, for the above reasons, and some others to be enumerated, the relationship of professional and client seems to be morally defective, per se. Now partly that stems from the fact that it is a relationship of inequality surrounded by a culture whose ethos is democratic and equalitarian. The professional client relationship is one in which the professional dominates and in which typically and perhaps inevitably the client is treated in both an impersonal and paternalistic fashion. This is an inevitable aspect of professionalism: insofar as we need to be cured, we are dependent on the skill of the doctor; to be represented in court, the skill of the lawyer, to be informed about the world beyond our eyes and ears, the skill of the journalist. This means, of course, that

the client is usually in a poor position to evaluate the skill and performance of the professional. Because the client cannot evaluate the performance, it leads professionals to be far more concerned with the way they are viewed by their colleagues than with the way they are viewed by their clients. This means too that clients will necessarily lack the power to make effective evaluations and criticisms of the way professionals are responding to client's needs. All professions encourage the view that its members are people of unusual ability, as having joined an elect by virtue of hard work and mastery of the mysteries of the profession. In addition, society at large treats members of a profession as members of an elite by paying them more than most people for the work they do with their heads rather than their hands and by according them a substantial amount of social prestige and power by virtue of their membership in the profession.[9] And this status mystery along with the other inequalities in the relationship often means that the professional feels justified in treating the client in a paternalistic and manipulative fashion: in doing things, as the phrase goes, for his or her or their own good.

While I think there are some correctives to this morally defective relationship, what is more troublesome is that the professions as a set of social practices have become thoroughly anti-intellectual and anti-ethical. I say anti-intellectual for this reason. There is little reward in the professions for systematically re-examining the intellectual basis of professional practice. The lawyer is rewarded for winning a case, not thinking about the law, the journalist for getting a story in print not meditating on the nature of truth, the doctor for treating the patient not thinking about the nature of health. That is, knowlege is defined in the

professions in such a way as to expand services and increase dependency. For this reason universities have generally come to the conclusion that professional schools have nothing to contribute to a genuinely liberal education. At my university, with a full complement of professional schools, the Colleges of Law and Medicine do not offer general courses on the nature of law and health. There is a presumption that the professions have nothing to say about these things. Schools of journalism often offer a general course but that is usually a course for "consumers" rather than a serious examination of journalistic truths. But it may be just as well that the universities do not teach such courses, for the demand of the relationship between the university and the profession normally insures that such courses are less explications of intellectual problems than defenses of and mystifications of the practices of the profession. Students are taught as consumers, who need something for their own good. Indeed, the general absence of the professions from general education and their wrong-headed inclusion when they are represented derives from the principal tenet of professionalism: because we have doctors, lawyers, journalists we need to know nothing substantial about law, medicine or politics; the professionals will do our knowing for us. And this argument ignores the fact that courses in professional schools are often devoid, in general, of intellectual content and often deliberately stifle thought. This charge is not merely true of journalism schools. A speaker at a recent Harvard conference on ethics in law and journalism noted that the reason a medical ethics course in his school was drawing a heavy enrollment was that it was the only course in the curriculum with any intellectual content. Law schools usually spend so much time on the fine details of torts, preparing

students in effect for the Bar Examination, that they have little time left for reflecting on the nature of the law.

But this systematic anti-intellectualism is complemented by an anti-ethical bias of the professions as well. How could that be with all the codes of ethics that the professions are regularly issuing? A strong case can be made, I think, that professional ethics serves largely to insulate and expand the power of the profession. They stipulate privileges of professional life and obligations owed the profession rather than duties and services. Charles Frankel's analysis of the most recent Canons of the American Bar Association pointed out that a majority of the canons were aimed at preserving professional respect and privilege.[10] Closer to home, when the AAUP was founded in 1915 it created two committees--A and B--one to deal with academic freedom, the other with academic ethics. Committee A on freedom has been busy since the inception of the association; Committee B did not meet for the first thirty-five years of its existence. Finally, the growth in ethics in journalism was less the result of an interest in good conduct per se than an attack on the style of the bohemian reporter and on the sensational journalism that satisfied the cultural styles of the working class and immigrant. That is, ethics were a reflection of status conflict and professional prerogative rather than high minded attempts to articulate a satisfying moral code. Moreover, because these codes of ethics largely relate to the conduct of working journalists--editors and reporters--they ignore where they do not deliberately mask the deeper problems of the ethics of private property: the ethics governing the acquisition, use and disposal of property that under the constitution partakes of a public trust.

If the professions create a kind of intellectual and ethical psychosis, they seem also to create a political psychosis. Professionals deal with the problems of society by identifying the entire human habitat with the capacity of the profession. Depending on whom we're talking to, the problems we have would evaporate if we had more law and litigation, more medicine and hospitals, welfare and social work, information and journalism.

Is the growth of professionalism in journalism also part of this process? To a different degree and in a different way I think it is and, therefore, journalism is subject to much of the same criticism. In a recent paper, I stated the case in the following way.[11]

The effect of modern advances in communication is to enlarge the range of reception while narrowing the points of distribution. Large numbers are spoken to but are precluded from vigorous and vital discussion. Indeed audiences are not even understood. Professional classes appropriate the right to provide official versions of human thought, to pronounce on the meanings present in the heads and lives of anonymous peoples. Over time the media of communication become increasingly centralized and conglomerate and with that a few journalists achieve vast readership while other people are reduced to representation in the letters to the editor. The new commodity called "information" and the knowledge necessary to produce this thing of the world becomes increasingly centralized in certain elites and institutions. The civic landscape becomes increasingly divided into knowledgeable elites and ignorant masses. The very existence of a commodity such as "information" and an institution called "media" make each other necessary. More people spend more time dependent on the journalist, the publisher, and the program director. Every week they wait for Time.

The new media centralize and monopolize civic knowledge and as importantly the techniques of knowing. People become "consumers" of communication as they become consumers of everything else, and as consumers they stand dependent on centralized sources of supply.

The development then of monopolistic or, if that is too strong, oligopolistic structures of knowledge and knowing and the professional classes that control them expropriates the more widespread, decentralized body of human impulses, skills, and knowledge on which a civil society depends. Given a network of such monopolies backed by corporate economic and political power we reach a stage under the impulse of advanced communication where there is simultaneously advancing knowledge and declining knowing. We keep waiting to be informed, to be educated, but lose the capacity to produce knowledge for ourselves in decentralized communities of understanding. All this apparatus generates continuous change and obsolescence.

In that somewhat opaque language I was suggesting that the great danger in modern journalism is one of a professional orientation to an audience: the belief, usually implicit, that the audience is there to be informed, to be educated, to be filled with the vital information and knowledge whose nature, production and control rests with a professional class. This knowledge is defined, identified, presented based upon canons of professional expertise over which the audience exercises no real judgment or control. And in this new client-professional relationship that emerges the same structures of dependency are developed that typify the relations of doctors, lawyers, and social workers to their clients.

What, in short, the professions seem to cultivate, and here we return to the overriding theme of Innis' work, is the trained incapacity to assume

a general point of view. The rewards and demands of the professions are such that the roles cannot be laid aside even when they are clearly inappropriate.[12] The professional imagination stills the voice of the moral community, the primary community of citizenship. To see Tom Wicker shed his professional being while covering Attica is one of the rewarding features of his book, A Time To Die; to read his latest work on the press is to read of someone trapped in a professional skin. We would, in short, all be better served if professionals, including journalists, were to see themselves less as subject to the demands of their profession and more to the demands of the general moral and intellectual point of view. In this sense we need a good deal less rather than more professionalism in our society and a good deal less professionalism in our education.[13] The university tradition which attempts against the claims of specialisms to adopt the general moral and intellectual point of view must be cultivated not only within professional schools but across the university. But as the necessary and critical complement to that task, there must be in the larger society a restoration of the public and public realm as the necessary countervailing power to that of the professions.

III.

The modern school of journalism begins its teaching from the premises of the profession it serves. I do not mean by this that it simply teaches the current techniques and knowledge of the craft, but that implicitly it transmits the ideology of the profession, often of professionalism in general. In transmitting the language of professionalism it makes available to students a "take-it-for-granted world" of journalism that is rarely

questioned or critically analyzed. Phrases such as "informing the public" or "the public's right to know" are occasionally scrutinized, but education often completely ignores the fundamental conceptual terms of journalism. A telling example is that innocent little phrase "the public" that figures so prominently in journalistic discourse. It is not merely that there is rarely serious question over whether the press does inform the public, or what it means to be informed or the degree to which the press monopolizes the public but the even more fundamental question of just what the public is, or even if the public exists in any reasonable sense is never examined.

It is a melancholy exercise to re-read three great books of the 1920's, three books that laid the foundation for modern media studies: Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion (1922) and The Phantom Public (1925) and John Dewey's The Public and Its Problems (1927). In these works the central intellectual problem was to analyze the conditions under which public life could flourish, the conditions contributing to the formation of a vital and rational public sphere. The great fear evident in those books was that the public had become merely a fiction. We are all much indebted to the late Hannah Arendt and her remarkable book The Human Condition which, in the English speaking world, single handedly kept alive intellectual concern with public life during recent years. I do not have the time here to analyze the problem of the public and so must content myself with some simple assertions. Despite the fact that the public is regularly invoked as the final justification for the press, the simple fact is that the public has disappeared. There is no public out there. As Gertrude Stein said of Oakland: "Out there there is no there there." In professional circles talk about the public continues, of course, but no one any longer knows what they

are talking about: a definition of the public and public life has been smuggled in but it is not subject to critical scrutiny.

I think a case can be sustained that the growth of professionalism was implicitly an attack upon the public and public life. This attack has two complementary sides. The first was an emphasis on the private nature of the relationship between professional and client which encouraged intimacy and privatization as a mode of being. The second was the destruction of the sphere and form of oral discourse in which public life could flourish. Professionalism was not the only source of the attack on the public, to be sure, but the growth of the power and status of the professions depended upon curbing the influence of the public and public life. It meant, in short, the substitution of professional knowledge for public discourse as the reigning model of rationality.

Despite the eclipse of the public, the word still hangs in our vocabulary as some kind of strange reminder. Unfortunately, the public exists now largely as a statistical artifact: as the concatenation of individual judgments expressed through opinion polls but, most critically, not as a sphere of rational discourse. Our system of communication is not addressed at the public but at private individuals. We have evolved a radical form of mobilized privacy: the individual hooked into long lines of communication from remote sources. This transformation involved the displacement of the reading public--a group who spoke to one another about the news in rational and critical ways--into a reading and listening audience. It involved the deverbalization of public space or the turning of public space into a zone of privacy and intimacy. Whether one examines the technology of communication, transportation, housing, power, or whatever,

the same general story is told: a service is piped into the private zone of the isolated individual from a centralized source.

The role of the university in all this should not be minimized either. While not as deverbalized as the rest of life, it too has shown a preference, for economic reasons, for mechanical communication, for the transmission of information to consumers who are silently tended by professionals. It has favored those subjects that can be transmitted in mass ways and those textbooks that suppress discourse as they pretend to be serving it. The university has adopted the route generally of power over intelligence, has suppressed the subjects of ethics and values because they do not lend themselves to mechanical transmission of facts, has extirpated its own finest tradition, and in the process has virtually destroyed the humanities, which depend, intrinsically, on oral and public discourse. How do we, to ask C. Wright Mills' question, reconcile mass education with humane learning?

What are we to do caught as we are between these forces of professionalism, privatization, the loss of the public sphere and the decline of the university tradition?

There are a number of things. First, the great single task of scholarship is to conceptually restore the idea of the public and public life. There is enough research and critical thinking needed here to keep us occupied for a generation. Second, we must aid the media in restoring the public as a real rather than a fictive part of American politics. I argued in a paper a few years back that the press has a vital role and stake in the restoration of a critical reading public, a public it addresses not like children in need of an education but like a group of rational men

and women who must argue with the press as they argue with one another. This above all rests upon a deprofessionalization of journalistic life so that the public is not regarded as a client but rather that the press and public stand in an equal and argumentative partnership. This is part of a wider task in which there is plenty of work for everyone: the re-creation of the res publica, a set of institutions that are not only participatory in a formal sense but critical and rational as forms of discourse. The highest reaches of rationality where fact and value merge into judgment is not a region certifiable by profession, or by degree or by experience; strictly speaking, it is not certifiable at all but merely testable in a rational process of discourse. Our support of the special status and ethics of the journalist is justified only if our trust and confidence in the institutions in which they work is justified. To the degree our institutions are unjust or unwise or undesirable, to that same degree is the special status of journalists weakened if not destroyed.

On the side of education we must face a series of equally difficult challenges. First, we must extirpate much of the professional spirit of our curricula. We must do that in order to reassert the university tradition, ir order to reassert the general ethical and intellectual point of view against all the claims of specialism that would overwhelm it. We must recognize that we are not merely training people for a profession or for the current demands of professional practice but for membership in the public and for a future that transcends both the limitations of contemporary pracitce and contemporary politics. Our client is more a re-vitalized public than it is consumers or the professions. We have not arrived at nirvana and are not living among the last word in human practices and institutions.

Above all this means freeing ourselves from the tyranny of the present, of today's headlines, in order to take a longer view of things, in order to assert the scholars tradition of concern with what is beyond our nose. That is, we must be concerned to teach, above all, the limitations of journalism as a practice.

IV.

At the conclusion of the greatest work on theoretical economics to be published in this century, The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money, J.M. Keynes remarks that his solutions to the problems of depression and unemployment would work in the long run. He then noted that, unfortunately, in the long run we are all dead. His colleague, another eminent British economist, Joan Robinson, retorted but in the short run we all get screwed. That exchange suggests a division of labor. The role of the press is simply to make sure that in the short run we don't get screwed and it does this best not by treating us as consumers of news, but by encouraging the conditions of public discourse and life. The task of the university is to make sure there is a long run by laying down the conditions of scholarly understanding that cultivates rational habits and serviceable knowledge. For us caught between these two demands there is a double burden to make some contribution to both. We can do that by reconstituting the university as a public and by making this association a model of a debating society where a critical public functions. And we can also contribute by putting a harness on the ideology of professionalism which in its extreme manifestations destroys the conditions of an effective press and public.

Footnotes

[1]Harold Innis, "A Plea for the University Tradition," The Dalhousie Review, Vol. 24, (1944-45), pp. 298-305.

[2]This formulation is persuasively presented by Robert Sobel, The Manipulators, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1976, Ch. 1.

[3]Letter dated September 14, 1926 from the files of the College of Communications, University of Illinois.

[4]Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976, p. 323. This entire paragraph relies heavily upon and paraphrases aspects of Bledstein's argument.

[5]Quoted in Ibid, pp. 282-283.

[6]Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977.

[7]Charles Frankel, "Review" of American Bar Association, Code of Professional Responsibility, The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 43 (1976), pp. 874-876 at 883.

[8]Renata Adler, "Reflections on Political Scandal," New York Review of Books, December 8, 1977, pp. 20-33.

[9]Richard Wasserstrom, "Lawyers as Professionals: Some Moral Issues," Human Rights, Vol. 5 (1975), pp. 1-24 at p. 21. Much of this paragraph is a slightly twisted paraphrase of Wasserstrom's argument.

[10]Frankel, Op. Cit., p. 884.

[11]James W. Carey, "Canadian Economic Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis," Studies in Canadian Communications, Gertrude Joch Robinson and Donald F. Theall, eds., Montreal: McGill University Programme in Communications, 1975, pp. 42-43.

[12]Wasserstrom, Op. Cit., p. 15.

[13]Ibid, p. 12.